



# PRESS RELEASE

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**For Immediate Release**

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## **UNION OFFICIAL CHARGED IN FEDERAL COURT WITH EMBEZZLEMENT**

Madison, Wisconsin – Stephen P. Sinnott, United States Attorney for the Western District of Wisconsin, announced today that a federal grand jury sitting in Madison returned a fourteen count indictment charging Rebecca Bandt, DOB: 12/29/60, of Marshfield, Wisconsin, with five counts of embezzlement from Local 717 of the United Food and Commercial Workers International Union (UFCW), five counts of falsifying union records, and four counts of filing false reports with the Secretary of Labor.

The indictment alleges that Bandt was the President of Local 717 of the UFCW during the time period of the embezzlement, and had been President of Local 717 since 1996. The UFCW is an international union representing approximately 1.4 million workers in the United States and Canada in a wide range of fields including meatpacking, food processing, and footwear manufacturing. At the time of the indictment, Local 717 of the UFCW was located in Marshfield, Wisconsin, and represented approximately 118 employees of the Weinbrenner Shoe Company of Merrill, Wisconsin.

The indictment further alleges that between September 15, 2000 and continuing to in or about October 2004, Bandt engaged in a pattern of conduct in which she obtained \$14,064.73 from Local 717, to which she was not entitled, by writing herself 43 checks from the union's account. She attempted to conceal the embezzlement by entering false payee and false check amounts into Local 717's check disbursement journal. Bandt also caused Local 717 to file false Labor and Organization Annual Reports, for each fiscal year between 2001 and 2004, by under-reporting the amount of funds she actually received from the union because of the embezzlement.

If convicted of count one, Bandt faces a maximum penalty of five years in prison, a \$250,000 fine and three years supervised release. Bandt faces a maximum of one year imprisonment, a \$10,000 fine and one year of supervised release on each of the remaining counts.

The indictment against Rebecca Bandt was the result of an investigation conducted by the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Labor Management Standards. Prosecution of the case has been assigned to Assistant U.S. Attorney Peter M. Jarosz.

You are advised that a charge is merely an accusation and that a defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty.

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